

# The Man That Got Away

**THE PHILBY CONSPIRACY.**  
By Bruce Page, David  
Leitch and Phillip Knight-  
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WHAT is—and probably will remain for some time—the authoritative study of the espionage activities on behalf of the Soviet Union by trusted members of the British establishment Kim Philby, Guy Burgess and Donald MacLean, has been produced by three members of the Insight team of the London *Sunday Times*. Messrs. Page, Leitch and Knightley, together with others of the thirteen-member Insight team, wrote for their paper last year a revealing series on the Philby case. They have written a book worthy of consideration in the non-Communist world, especially when studied in relation to Philby's own report. ("My Silent War," reviewed in *The Sunday Sun*, May 5, 1968).

"The Philby Conspiracy" is the result of detailed, painstaking investigation on the part of the authors in those parts of the world where the Russian agents left their traces, which were considerable in view of the unorthodox behavior of Burgess, MacLean and Philby. Every effort was made to find out what these men were doing, what they accomplished, and perhaps most important of all, why they chose to betray their country and its allies.

The authors interviewed all of the friends and associates of the three, and as many former members of the British and American intelligence and security services as they could uncover. They did not receive any official assistance from the latter organizations. In fact, their pursuit of the case must have been viewed with distaste on both sides of the Atlantic.

## A Real Shocker

This distaste will be readily understood through reading this book, because even in a world blase about spies and subversion, it can be best described as a real shocker. I once asked a man why he had embroiled a sizable amount of

money and he replied, "Because it was so easy." One could characterize this case in the same terms.

The web of evidence assembled by the authors and presented with dispassionate brilliance is such an overwhelming indictment of the British Security system that one would be inclined to ask whether the Soviet intelligence service, with the peculiar involuted method of thinking characteristic of such organizations, did not question the reality of their achievement. It is quite possible that the Russians may not have believed what was reported.

It would not have been the first time this had happened to an intelligence service. They may have wondered at how these three Cambridge University contemporaries had been so successful in reaching such positions of height in the British Government—from which they could report information of considerable value to their Moscow masters. What made their accomplishments even more remarkable is that they each had openly espoused communism in their university days.

## Changed Philosophy

Philby, to build his cover, completely changed his public political philosophy and became a fascist sympathizer. His dissemblance was good enough to restrain any careful check on his background when he was hired by the British Secret Intelligence Service, cleared of connection with the Burgess-MacLean defection, defended in the House of Commons by "super-Mac" Harold Macmillan, and rehired by the S.I.S. and allowed to operate with complete impunity out of Beirut from whence he defected in 1963, with an implied prod. He now resides in Moscow with the wife (his fourth) whom he took from his co-traitor MacLean, granted Soviet citizenship by the unanimous vote of the Presidium.

Donald MacLean and Guy Burgess made their way into the British foreign service. The former showed such

promise that he was considered sure of reaching ambassadorial rank, just as Philby was viewed by his MI-6 colleagues as a potential head of that organization.

As Philby revealed operations of the British and American intelligence service to the Russians, MacLean reported on diplomatic matters such as American intentions in the Korean War, and nuclear secrets during the period in Washington when he had free access to the building of the Atomic Energy Commission.

## A Tragic End

Guy Burgess was different. He never advanced as far as his colleagues although considered by some as handsome, charming and brilliant, despite his open and aggressive homosexuality, noisy escapades and heavy drinking. The authors hint that he may have been of greater value to the Russians than had been suspected.

These are the three whose careers end in Moscow: Burgess, already dead as a result of his heavy drinking; MacLean, a lonely and disturbed adviser to the Soviet Foreign Office; and Philby, circulating among the party elites but still following the cricket scores in the airmail edition of the *Times*.

While their case is primarily British in nature, it has important evidence for Americans too if we ever aspire to understand the omniscience of the Soviet intelligence service. Rather than taking any satisfaction in the problems of the British, we should say: "There but for the grace of God, go we." Or maybe there we go, anyway.

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Mr. Kirkpatrick, now professor of political science at Brown University, was executive director-comptroller of the Central Intelligence Agency until his retirement in 1965. During his 23 years in American intelligence work, he had frequent contact with the British Secret Intelligence Service. He is the author of "The Real CIA."